Is the upcoming hot weather because of a Spanish plume?

12 August 2016 - We are expecting a brief hot spell early next week, but why is this happening, how long is it going to last for and how is it going to end?

This weekend is looking fairly quiet weather-wise. However, there will be quite a bit of cloud around at times with a few showers, mainly over parts of Scotland on Saturday. An area of high pressure will build through Sunday bringing the often settled conditions. This will drift away eastwards as we go into next week, dragging very warm air in from the south.

Temperatures are then likely to climb on Monday, getting into the low 20s Celsius in the north and high 20s further south. There should also be plenty of warm sunshine, especially around southern England and parts of Wales and the Midlands, where the highest temperatures are expected.

The peak of this hot spell will most likely be during Tuesday or Wednesday when temperatures across some southern areas are expected to reach the low 30s Celsius, and much of the UK should stay dry with lengthy sunny spells.

A thundery breakdown is then expected as we go through Wednesday, bringing an end to the fine weather. A frontal system is forecast to push into the west with thundery showers further east. It should still be very warm for some, especially towards the east, but temperatures are then likely to drop.

Is this a Spanish plume?

Perhaps not in its truest sense. Deputy Chief Meteorologist Laura Ellam explains: "A 'Spanish plume', a term coined by meteorologists in the 1980s, is when hot air from the Iberian plateau moves northwards towards the UK, and then provides the conditions necessary for intense thunderstorms to develop, after a spell of fine weather.

"In reality, the air across the UK can originate from a number of places and that is what we can expect next week. Warm air from Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, Iberia and the tropical Atlantic will all come together in layers and head towards the UK.

"The weather front arriving from the west midweek will provide the large-scale lifting of the layered mass of warm air. This it will lead to it becoming unstable, allowing for scattered thunderstorms to break out."

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